



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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### **KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED IN WESTERN GULF FROM U.S./MEXICO BORDER TO ALABAMA/FLORIDA BOUNDARY**

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the western zone is closed, effective 12:00 noon (local time) August 26, 2000. The fishery will remain closed through June 30, 2001. This closure affects federal waters or the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary (see reverse). NOAA Fisheries has determined that the western zone commercial quota of 1.05 million pounds of king mackerel for the 2000/2001 fishing year will be reached on August 25, 2000.

Closure of the commercial king mackerel fishery in the western Gulf complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP) and is necessary to protect the overfished Gulf group king mackerel resource. NOAA Fisheries is seeking cooperative action from Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) to close commercial harvest of king mackerel concurrently in their waters that adjoin the affected closure area.

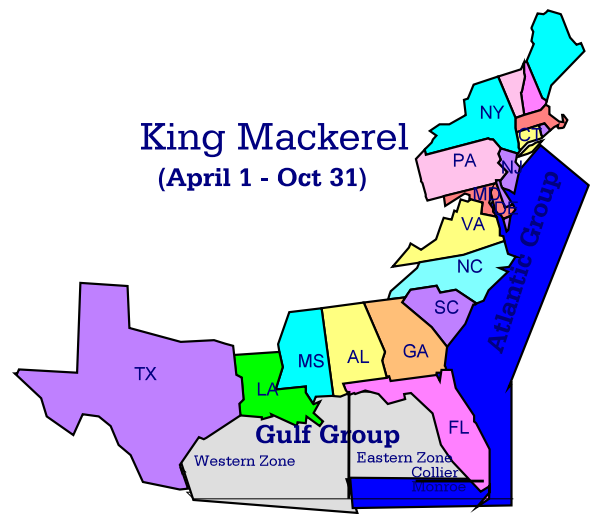
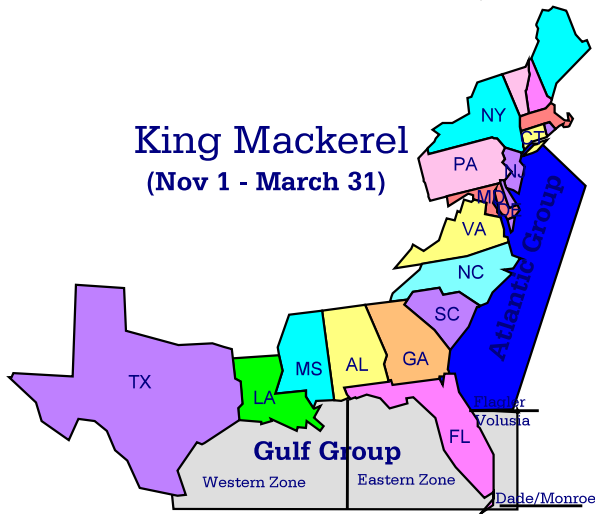
Until July 1, 2001, no person aboard a vessel issued a federal commercial king mackerel permit may fish for, retain, or possess Gulf group king mackerel in or from the western zone EEZ. However, a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat (for-hire vessel) for which a commercial king mackerel permit has been issued may fish for king mackerel in the closed zone under the recreational bag limit but only when that vessel is operating as a for-hire vessel. Throughout the EEZ, the daily bag/possession limit for Gulf group king mackerel is two fish per person,

except for the captain and crew on for-hire vessels who are subject to a zero-fish bag limit. A charter vessel or headboat with a federal commercial permit is operating as a for-hire vessel when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including captain and crew. For a person aboard a for-hire vessel to fish for or possess king mackerel or other coastal migratory pelagic fish in or from the EEZ, the vessel must have on board a valid charter vessel/headboat permit issued by NOAA Fisheries.

During the closure of the western zone commercial fishery, the recreational fishery for Gulf group king mackerel will remain open throughout the EEZ. Nonetheless, no king mackerel caught in the western zone, under the 2-fish recreational bag limit or otherwise, may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This prohibition of sale does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Quotas and closure provisions for mackerel fisheries were developed in the FMP jointly by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. In compliance with the FMP, an annual commercial quota of 3.39 million pounds was established for Gulf group king mackerel. This quota was divided into commercial quotas of 1.05 million pounds for the western zone and 2.34 million pounds for the eastern zone off Florida. Regulations implemented under the FMP require closure of any segment of the commercial fishery when its quota is reached or is projected to be reached.

# WESTERN AND EASTERN ZONES, AND SEASONAL BOUNDARIES OF GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL



## STATUS OF QUOTAS AND DAILY TRIP/LANDING LIMITS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERIES FOR GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL FOR THE 2000/2001 FISHING YEAR

ZONE/SUBZONE	QUOTA (POUNDS, lb)	DAILY VESSEL TRIP LIMITS	DURATION OF TRIP LIMITS			STATUS		
						BEGINNING		CURRENT
EASTERN ZONE (Florida)	2,340,000							
East Coast Subzone <sup>1</sup>	1,082,250	50 Fish	Nov 1	until	1,082,250 lb	Opens	11/01/2000	<b>Nonexistent</b> (Atlantic group)
West Coast Subzones	1,257,750							
<u>Northern</u>								
Hook and Line	175,500	1,250 lb 500 lb	July 1	until	131,625 lb 175,500 lb	Opened	07/01/2000	<b>Open: 1,250 lb/day</b>
<u>Southern</u>								
Hook and Line	541,125	1,250 lb 500 lb	July 1	until	405,844 lb 541,125 lb	Opened	07/01/2000	<b>Open: 1,250 lb/day</b>
Gillnet	541,125	25,000 lb	Jan 16 '01	until	541,125 lb	Opens	01/16/2001 <sup>2</sup>	<b>Closed</b>
WESTERN ZONE (Texas - Alabama)	1,050,000	0 lb	July 1	until	1,050,000 lb	Opens	07/01/2001	<b>Closed 08/26/2000</b>
Hook and Line								

<sup>1</sup> The Florida east coast subzone, located between the Volusia/Flagler and Dade/Monroe County boundaries, exists only from November 1 through March 31, when the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel extends in to that area. From April 1 through October 31, king mackerel landed in that area belong to the Atlantic migratory group.

<sup>2</sup> Fishery is closed through 6:00 a.m. January 16, 2001.

To report violations of commercial trip limits or closures, contact NMFS Law Enforcement Division at 727/570-5344 or 1-800/853-1964. NMFS is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Additional information on southeastern fisheries may be found on the websites of the South Atlantic (<http://www.safmc.nmfs.gov>) or Gulf of Mexico (<http://www.gulfcouncil.org>) Fishery Management Council; they may be contacted by e-mail at [safmc@noaa.gov](mailto:safmc@noaa.gov) or [gulf.council@noaa.gov](mailto:gulf.council@noaa.gov), respectively.

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